

*Paul Kane*

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SKETCHES BY PAUL KANE IN THE  
INDIAN COUNTRY, 1845-1848

BY

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## SKETCHES BY PAUL KANE IN THE INDIAN COUNTRY, 1845-1848

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Paul Kane was born September 3, 1810. Some accounts assert that he was a native of Mallow, County Cork, Ireland; others say he was born in Canada after his parents had arrived in their new home. However that may be, the date is not questioned. He died at his home in Toronto, February 20, 1871. A notice in the *Toronto Globe*, 2 days after his death, referred to him as "an old resident of the city of Toronto, and one of our pioneers."

Where or under whom Kane may have studied drawing or painting is not known, but it is thought he painted in Toronto and Cobourg until the year 1835, and about that time came to the United States, where he remained 5 or 6 years. Thence he went to Europe and studied in England and on the continent, and returned to Toronto early in 1845. Soon after his return from Europe, later in the same year, he again continued his wanderings, this time into the Indian country to the westward. Kane's only publication, "Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America," is a record of his travels among the Indians and was published in London, England, 1859. It is a work of much interest. Another book was contemplated, but failing eyesight made it impossible for him to continue writing and painting.

A century ago many Indians were to have been encountered in the vicinity of Toronto, with native camps and villages on the shores of lakes and streams to the northward. Georgian Bay, that great arm of Lake Huron, with its innumerable islands, was bordered by the camps of several tribes who were attracted to the region to hunt and fish. Toronto, the seat of government, was often visited by groups of Indians who came to treat with the Indian agent, and during the long winters was frequented by others who sought aid when food became scarce and wild game could not be procured. Such were the surroundings and conditions which early caused the young artist to become interested in the Indians, an interest which developed and later impelled him to undertake two long journeys into the wilderness for the purpose of obtaining a series of authentic sketches of the natives in their natural environments. To quote from the preface of his "Wanderings": "The principal object in my

undertaking was to sketch pictures of the principal chiefs, and their original costumes, to illustrate their manners and customs, and to represent the scenery of an almost unknown country." How very successful he was in his endeavors will be shown in the following pages.

The first and shorter of Kane's two important trips was made during the year 1845. He left Toronto June 17, and after an absence of 5½ months returned home on the first day of December. On May 9, 1846, he started on his more important journey, which led him across the continent. He arrived at Fort Vancouver December 8, 1846, and continued on to Fort Victoria. Two years later, during October 1848, he returned safely to Toronto bearing with him a rich collection of "pictures of the principal chiefs, and their original costumes," also sketches of the country through which he had passed, and of scenes which he had witnessed. But he did not keep a journal during his wanderings, and consequently the volume that he later published is thought to have been compiled from memory, with the aid of scant notes which he may have had but of which no record has been preserved. "Wanderings" was written several years after his return to Toronto, and in preparing the manuscript he is believed by some to have been assisted by one of the scholars of the day, one who was then connected with the University of Toronto.

The sketches made by Kane during his second trip attracted many persons to his work, and when exhibited they received much favorable comment and created great interest. He had been assisted on his journey to the Pacific by Sir George Simpson, from whom he received letters to the Factors of all posts of the Hudson's Bay Company. Later he painted 12 pictures in oil for Simpson, and also the same number for the Government. Regarding these Dr. Kenney writes:

The twelve pictures painted for Sir George Simpson which, it is quite possible, were the same as the twelve that were exhibited in Buckingham Palace, London, in 1858, have, apparently, disappeared. Of the twelve that were painted for the Parliament of Canada, six are in the National Gallery, Ottawa; five are in the chambers of the Speaker of the House of Commons, Ottawa, and one is lost, possibly burned.<sup>1</sup>

As related to the writer by Mrs. Maude Allan Cassels, at her home in Toronto, during the summer of 1931, her father, the late Hon. George W. Allan, did not meet Kane until after the latter returned from the Pacific. About the close of 1852 they again met, and Kane

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from a personal letter from Dr. J. F. Kenney, Public Archives of Canada, June 8, 1939.

was in despair because, after much petitioning and long waiting, the Government would only give him an order for 12 pictures for which he was to receive £500. The amount was not enough to enable him to do what he desired—write and publish his book. Then it was that her father gave Kane the order for 100 paintings, for which he paid at the same rate as the Government had paid for the 12. The paintings remained in the family for many years—until the unique collection was acquired by Dr. E. B. Osler and by him presented to the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology, Toronto, where they are now preserved.

A large number of the artist's field sketches, made on his two trips into the Indian country, were likewise preserved in Toronto. Some were in oil, others in water color, and the great majority in pencil. These included the 1 in oil and 11 in water color now in the writer's collection.

The small water-color portrait-sketches made in the field portray the Indians as they were encountered by the artist, with all their wild and barbaric surroundings. The features of all are carefully drawn, but some are less finished than others, thus revealing the haste with which they were made. These were the original sketches from which the large portraits, now hanging in the Museum, were made by Kane in his Toronto studio. However, the latter were seldom exact copies as the artist evidently endeavored to make more pleasing pictures, but in so doing he lessened their value and interest both historically and ethnologically. The field sketches appearing in this paper have never before been reproduced.

The portrait of Paul Kane shown in the frontispiece is reproduced from a photograph made about 1855.

#### FIRST JOURNEY

June 17, 1845, to December 1, 1845

Kane departed from Toronto June 17, 1845, on the first of his two trips into the Indian country. He went without definite plans, and without a companion, and carried, so he wrote,<sup>2</sup> "but my portfolio and box of paints, my gun, and a stock of ammunition." He soon arrived at the south shore of Lake Simcoe, crossed to Orillia, thence continued to Sturgeon Bay on Lake Huron. Here he engaged an Indian with a bark canoe to conduct him to Penetanguishene where

<sup>2</sup> All quotations, unless otherwise stated, are from the artist's book, "Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America." London, 1859.

he remained until June 20. During the next fortnight he went westward along the south shore of Georgian Bay, crossed the peninsula and visited the Ojibway village at the mouth of Saugeen River. It was an interesting settlement with a population of about 200, in the midst of rich and fertile land, only a small part of which was cultivated. Fish served as the principal article of food, but they killed "hundreds of deer by erecting a fence of brushwood many miles in extent, behind which the Indians conceal themselves; and as the deer, in their annual migrations, are seeking an opening through this fence, they fall a prey to the unerring aim of the red man."

Returning to Penetanguishene, Kane obtained necessary provisions and soon set out for Manetouawning, some 200 miles distant, in a deep bay at the extremity of Manetoulin Island, in Lake Huron. Before entering the Bay of Manetouawning he arrived at the Spider Islands, on one of which he landed to escape a heavy shower, and there remained the balance of the day sketching. A single lodge stood near the shore—"a woman and her two children were there, but the men were off in the distance fishing, which is the principal occupation of the Indians hereabouts in summer, there being very little game, except occasionally a bear or deer, and, at particular seasons, ducks."

The oil sketch, reproduced in figure 1, was made at that time and shows the single habitation mentioned in the narrative. The conical wigwam is partly covered with heavy, coarse mats and sheets of birch bark. To the right is a shelter open on one side. A fire is burning just beyond, above and in the smoke of which is a long pole from which hang what appear to be fish or bits of meat being dried.

At the time of Kane's visit the village of Manetouawning consisted of a group of 40 or 50 log cabins which had been erected for the Indians by the Provincial Government. Here was "a mission with a church and pastor, an Indian agent, a doctor, and a blacksmith, all paid by the Government." Some 2,000 Indians had gathered at the village "awaiting the arrival of the vessel that was freighted with their annual presents, comprising guns, ammunition, axes, kettles, and other implements useful to the Indian." The Indians had come from their distant camps near Lake Superior, from Nipissing, and from their villages on the islands and bordering shores of Huron.

Having remained a fortnight on Manetoulin Island, Kane continued on to Sault Ste. Marie, thence to Mackinaw. At the latter place he met Ojibway and Ottawa Indians, 2,600 in all, who had assembled

"to receive their pay of \$25,000.00 for land ceded to the United States." Soon he continued his journey to Green Bay, on the west shore of Lake Michigan, and a few days after his arrival at the Bay "left in company with three gentlemen going to Fox River to see the Manomane Indians, who were now assembling to receive their payment for lands sold to the United States Government in the vicinity of Lake Winnebago."



FIG. 1.—July 1845. An Ojibway camp on one of the Spider Islands in Lake Huron, northeast of Manitoulin Island. Size, 8½ by 13 inches.

The party of four embarked in Kane's bark canoe and during the second night arrived at an Indian log cabin, on the shore of Lake Winnebago, where two Indian girls, sisters, lived. Here he remained the following day "and took their likenesses; the elder was named Iwa-toke or The Serpent, the younger was called Ke-wah-ten or The North Wind." The original portrait-sketch of Iwa-toke, the "likeness" of the narrative, in water color, is reproduced in figure 2. The most interesting detail of this sketch is the manner in which the two small braids of hair are joined on the forehead.

Leaving the cabin occupied by the sisters, the party went up Lake Winnebago to Fox River. They entered the river and stopped at "an Indian trading-house, round about which a number of idlers were pledging everything they possessed for liquor." Here, so Kane told: "an Indian called Wah-bannim, or, the White Dog, sat to me for his likeness. He was in mourning for his wife, who had died some three



months before; the mourning suit consisted of a coat of black paint with which he had smeared his face. He apologised for not appearing in full mourning costume to have his likeness taken, lamenting that a part of the paint had worn off." The original water-color sketch of the Indian, revealing the face and neck partly covered with black paint,<sup>3</sup> is reproduced in figure 2. Both this and the sketch of the



FIG. 2.—Two Menominee Indians from Lake Winnebago, September 1845. Left, girl, Iwa-toke; right, man, Wah-bannim.

girl Iwa-toke appear rather crude and unfinished when compared with the portrait-sketches made by Kane during his return journey from the Pacific coast to Toronto, but they are interesting examples of his earlier work in the Indian country.

Kane reached the encampment of the Menominee Indians, where he remained some days and then began his homeward journey. He went by way of Fox River to Lake Winnebago. Crossing to Lake Michigan, he embarked on a small steamer which landed him safely at Buffalo, thence on to his home, Toronto, where he arrived December 1, 1845.

<sup>3</sup> This was an established custom and was mentioned by Hoffman in his monograph "The Menominee Indians," 14th Ann. Rep. Bur. Ethnol., 1896. He wrote (p. 239): "Mourners blacken their faces with charcoal or ashes. Formerly it was sometimes customary to add resin to the ashes, that the materials might remain longer on the skin, and a widow was not presumed to marry again until this substance had entirely worn off."

## SECOND JOURNEY

May 1846 to October 1848

## FROM TORONTO TO FORT VANCOUVER

May to December, 1846

It is not the purpose of this article to describe in detail the route followed by the artist in his travels from Toronto to the Pacific coast and return, but to refer briefly to certain places visited, and to Indians encountered, of which drawings or sketches were made. The limited number that will be mentioned and reproduced are regarded as characteristic examples of his work.

Kane left Toronto May 9, 1846, and, after traversing Lake Huron, reached Sault Ste. Marie. The voyageurs with whom he traveled continued westward to the Lake of the Woods which they crossed June 7. Later in the month, after an uneventful journey, they arrived at Fort Garry at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, the site of the present city of Winnipeg.

Fort Garry was referred to by Kane as "one of the best built forts in the Hudson's Bay territory. It has a stone wall, with bastions mounted with cannon, inclosing large store-houses and handsome residences for the gentlemen of the establishment."

Three days before Kane's arrival at Fort Garry the half-breeds had departed for their summer buffalo hunt, and as he was anxious to witness the various events and to participate in the chase, he engaged a guide and 2 days later overtook one of the bands of hunters "at the Pambinaw River, and found the band cutting poles, which they are obliged to carry with them to dry the meat on, as, after leaving this, no more timbered land is met with until the three bands meet together again at the Turtle Mountain, where the meat they have taken and dried on the route is made into pimmi-kon." Different phases of the great hunt were sketched, and one of the finished paintings, made later in Toronto, shows many hunters with the famed Red River carts, some drawn by horses and others by oxen, setting out in search of the buffalo. The carts are laden with long poles, already mentioned, but on the return to the settlements, the load would consist of meat and pemmican. Another picture represents an en-

<sup>1</sup> This was the second Fort Garry, "within whose walls many scenes of excitement, hospitality and commerce took place during its existence from 1835-1882." Described in Bell, Charles Napier, *The Old Forts of Winnipeg*, 1738-1927. Trans. Hist. Sci. Soc. Manitoba, n. s., No. 3, Winnipeg, May 1927.

campment of the hunters on the prairie, with skin-covered tipis which did not differ greatly in appearance from a camp of the Cree with whom they were so closely associated. The artist's contact and intercourse with the métis hunters proved to be one of his most interesting experiences during the westward journey. The hunts were conducted twice each year and were entered into by the entire group of people. About the middle of June and of October they would meet on the White Horse Plain, some 20 miles west of Fort Garry, and would be formed into three bands, each taking a different route in their search for the buffalo herds. As Kane then wrote: "These bands are each accompanied by about 500 carts, drawn either by an ox or a horse. Their cart is a curious-looking vehicle, made by themselves with their own axes, and fastened together with wooden pins and leather strings, nails not being procurable. The tire of the wheel is made of buffalo hide, and put on wet; when it becomes dry, it shrinks, and is so tight that it never falls off, and lasts as long as the cart holds together."

A Red River cart, brought from Pembina, N. Dak., in 1882, is in the United States National Museum. The body is 4 feet 6 inches in length, and 3 feet 6 inches in width. The axle is 5 feet 9 inches in length, and the wheel is 5 feet 3 inches in diameter.

Kane left Fort Garry July 5, to continue toward the Pacific. He sailed from the mouth of Red River to Norway House, at the northern end of Lake Winnipeg, in a small sloop that belonged to the Company. From Norway House he crossed the lower end of the lake and entered the Saskatchewan River, which was ascended many miles to the Rocky Mountains. While ascending the Saskatchewan he passed Carlton House, Fort Pitt, and Fort Edmonton, as well as other trading posts of less importance. He left Fort Edmonton October 6 for Fort Assiniboine, on the Athabaska River. Soon Jasper House was reached, and thence, through ice and snow, he traveled over the mountains to Boat Encampment, on the headwaters of the Columbia. They floated rapidly down the Columbia, and 5 days later passed Fort Colville; Fort Vancouver was reached December 8, 1846.

#### ON THE PACIFIC COAST

December 1846 to July 1847

Kane remained at and about Fort Vancouver, "the largest post in the Hudson's Bay Company's dominions" some weeks, then went northward and arrived on April 9 at Fort Victoria on Vancouver Island. There he remained 2 months while "occupied in sketching ex-

cursions amongst the Indians in the neighborhood and along the surrounding coasts." The writer has had the pleasure of examining a large number of pencil sketches made by the artist during his stay on the West Coast but, unfortunately, many cannot be definitely identified, as Kane seldom placed marks of identification on his pencil sketches, a strange lack of foresight and one to be regretted.

Returning from the north, Kane arrived at Fort Vancouver June 20 and there remained until July 1,<sup>5</sup> when, together with a large party of the Company's men, he started on his return trip.

#### FORT VANCOUVER TO TORONTO

July 1847 to October 1848

On July 1, 1847, Kane, accompanying the Company's brigade of 9 boats, with between 60 and 70 men, departed from Fort Vancouver to begin his long journey homeward, during which he was destined to suffer much from exposure and to have many remarkable experiences before reaching his home in Toronto late the following year.

Advancing against the current of the Columbia the party arrived at Walla Walla July 12. This was on the left bank of the river, "a small fort built of *dobies*, or blocks of mud baked in the sun." From this post Kane made a trip to the interior and remained several days with Dr. Whitman at the mission that was so soon to become the scene of the atrocious crimes in which 14 persons, including Dr. Whitman and his wife, were murdered by Indians.

Having determined to cross overland from Fort Walla Walla to Fort Colville and there again join the Company's men, Kane set out from the former post July 29 and continued up the left bank of the Columbia. Soon he crossed the Snake River, which he called the "Nezperes River," and some 10 miles beyond encamped for the night. To quote briefly from his narrative of that date: "During the day we passed a large encampment of Nezperes, who were very kind to us, but stole a tin cup (a valuable article in that part of the world) I suppose as a souvenir of my visit. I took a sketch of a man, and might have frightened the chief into getting the cup restored to me by means of this sketch, but I had been so warned of the treachery and villany of these Indians, that I considered it too dangerous an experiment."

The original sketch to which Kane referred is reproduced in figure 3. It is a miniature in water color, a beautiful example of his

<sup>5</sup> Just 4 years later, on July 1, 1851, George Gibbs made a series of drawings of Fort Vancouver, Columbia Barracks, and other nearby places of interest.

work. The haste with which it was made is shown by its unfinished condition, only the head being worked out in detail, the upper part of the body being outlined but not filled in. The facial painting is most elaborate: Both cheeks back toward the ears are painted red, the chin is a purplish tint outlined with red, and the same purplish tint surrounds both eyes. Across the forehead are four lines of dark brown, and the same appears to have been used on the top of the head, forming with the red and purple a curious and unusual combination of colors. The lock of hair falling over the middle of the forehead was a characteristic custom of the tribe and, according to Mooney, caused the Kiowa to call them "Adal-katoigo," "people with hair cut across the forehead." A large painting later made from this sketch now hangs in the Museum in Toronto, but it was somewhat changed and a slender object was shown passing through the septum of the nose. This was evidently added to conform with the tribal name, although this particular tribe may never have followed the strange custom, and certainly this individual did not have such an ornament when the portrait-sketch was made.

Pushing forward, Kane and his companion arrived at Fort Colville during the night of August 8 and there remained several weeks. Frequent visits were made to the native village some 2 miles below the fort, "on a rocky eminence overlooking the Kettle Falls." Some sketches made at that time were later copied in oil, one of which represents a group of Indians watching two of their number play a game called "Al-kollock."

On September 21 word was received at Fort Colville of the murder of Dr. Whitman. The following day the two boats, each with a crew of six men, started up the Columbia for Boat Encampment, where they arrived October 10 and there awaited the coming of the party from the east, which did not appear until October 29. Boat Encampment was at the head of the navigable water, where three rivers unite to form the North Branch of the Columbia.

The goods brought from the east were soon transferred from the horses to the boats, and on October 30 the latter started down the Columbia for Fort Vancouver. Kane was now left with 4 Indians who were to drive the 56 horses back over the mountains. Fifteen horses carried the loads on the return trip, and all being in readiness, the party set out on the morning of the last day of the month. The trip over the mountains proved to be one of great difficulty. During the night of November 2 the thermometer dropped to 56° below zero, with ice and snow of great depth covering the land. Two days later the party reached the banks of the Athabaska River. The

stream was in flood and they were compelled to cross through the icy waters during a raging snowstorm. Food became scarce. Jasper House was reached on the sixth, and there it was necessary to remain several days while snowshoes were being made. Jasper Lake was passed 10 days later, and on November 29, after enduring many hardships, the party arrived at Fort Assiniboine, "having travelled



FIG. 3.—July 29, 1847. Nez Perces. On bank of the Columbia River near mouth of Snake River.

350 miles in fifteen days." Kane remained 2 days at Fort Assiniboine, thence continued on to Fort Edmonton, where he arrived on December 5.

Fort Edmonton, on the left bank of the North Saskatchewan, was in the heart of the Indian country. As Kane wrote: "Seven of the most important and warlike tribes on the continent are in constant communication with the fort, which is situated in the country of the

Crees and Assiniboines, and is visited at least twice in the year by Blackfeet, Sur-tees, Gros-Vents, Paygans, and Blood Indians, who come to sell the dried buffalo meat and fat for making pemmi-kon, which is prepared in large quantities for the supply of the other posts." Buffalo were plentiful in the surrounding country, and many had recently been killed within a few hundred yards of the fort.

The vast territory controlled by the Hudson's Bay Company was divided into a number of districts, of which the Saskatchewan District was one of great importance. This included the region now being discussed. A list prepared in 1856 gave the Indian population of the district as 28,050. Fort Edmonton was the most important post in the District, the others being Carlton, Fort Pitt, Rocky Mountain House, Lac la Biche, Lesser Slave Lake, Fort Assiniboine, Jasper's House, and Fort a la Corne.<sup>6</sup> Edmonton was built in 1795, and Carlton House was erected in 1797, the latter being "a half-way house to Edmonton on the Saskatchewan" when going from Lake Winnipeg.

Kane did not depart from Fort Edmonton to return east until May 25, 1848, but during the early part of the year he made several long trips away from the fort. Early in January 1848 he went down the river to Fort Pitt and, so he wrote: "I spent a very pleasant and interesting month at Fort Pitt, surrounded by Cree Indians, this being one of their principal places of resort, and had ample opportunity of studying their habits and manners."

Soon after Kane arrived at Fort Pitt a Cree chief, Kee-a-kee-ka-sa-coo-way, "The man who gives the war-whoop," reached the post. To quote again from the narrative: "Kee-a-kee-ka-sa-coo-way is the head chief of all the Crees, and was now travelling through all their camps to induce them to take up the tomahawk and follow him on a war excursion in the following spring. He had eleven medicine pipe-stems with him, ten of which belonged to inferior chiefs, who had already consented to join in the expedition." An interesting account of his actions is contained in "Wanderings." The day was very cold, 30° or 40° below zero. The Cree agreed to show the stems to Kane. He unwrapped the pipes with much ceremony, then filled them "with tobacco and some other weed, after which he took off all his clothes, with the exception of the breechcloth.

"On my looking rather suspiciously at the clothes he had taken off, seeing they were rather old and filthy, he took notice of my doing so, and remarked, that although he possessed better, he was not al-

<sup>6</sup> Bryce, George, *The remarkable history of the Hudson's Bay Company* (Appendix C). New York, 1900.

lowed by the customs of his tribe to wear them, as he was then mourning the death of four of his relations who had been killed by the Blackfeet the year before. . . . He then threw over his shoulders the skin of a wolf highly ornamented after the Indian fashion, and immediately removed the wrappers of leather, &c., that



FIG. 4.—January 1848. Kee-a-kee-ka-sa-too-way, Cree Chief.

covered one of the stems, and inserting it into one of the bowls he had previously filled with tobacco, commenced a song which I could not understand." This continued some time, then "after some little prolonged ceremony, consisting principally of all present smoking from each stem as it was opened, he permitted me to sketch them; but never left the lodge until I had finished and he had carefully recovered and removed them."



The original water-color portrait-sketch of the bearer of the pipe stems, Kēe-a-kee-ka-sa-coo-way, made on that midwinter day, is reproduced in figure 4. It reveals an individual with heavy features, unkempt, the lower part of the face painted red and the same red surrounding both eyes. An ornamented wolf skin rests on the left shoulder. A lock of hair, after the manner of the Cree, hangs down over the middle of the forehead. These details were characteristic of the tribe, and all had been mentioned some years before by Maximilian, who witnessed the arrival of a large party of Cree Indians at Fort Union, on the Upper Missouri River, June 27, 1833. He wrote at that time (p. 199):<sup>7</sup>

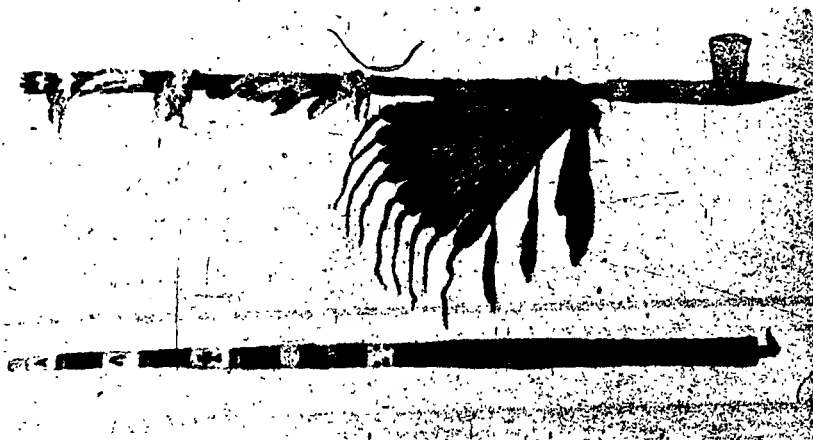


FIG. 5.—January 1848. Two pipestems carried by Kēe-a-kee-ka-sa-coo-way.

The Crees did not much differ, in appearance, from the Assiniboines; they are robust, powerful-looking men, with lank hair falling over their shoulders, and a broad flat lock, cut off straight over their eyes; one man, however, had it hanging down to his mouth. Some had their long hair plaited in several tails. . . . Their faces were painted red, some with black stripes. . . . Several of them wore wolf skins over their shoulders, with the head of the animal on the breast.

The similarity of the two descriptions is so great that the identity of the tribe to which the pipestem carrier belonged could be easily determined. The writer is of the belief that the large oil painting of Kēe-a-kee-ka-sa-coo-way, now hanging in the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology, which was made by Kane after his return to Toronto, was based entirely on this small sketch, the elaborate costume, feathers, and pipestem being added.

<sup>7</sup> Maximilian, Prince of Wied, *Travels in the interior of North America*. London, 1843.

Two of the eleven pipestems sketched at that time are shown in figure 5. The outline of a pipe, made in pencil and not colored, appears at the right of the upper sketch. The stems were of great importance, the pipe bowls being of minor consideration.

Kane returned to Edmonton and there remained until April 12, when he was told that a large band of Blackfeet were soon to visit Rocky Mountain House to trade with the Company. Ever eager to see the Indians in their native surroundings he joined a party of 6 men, with 10 horses loaded with goods, and went from Edmonton to Rocky Mountain House, where, after an uneventful trip, they arrived April 21.



FIG. 6.—April 21, 1848. "Arrived at Rocky Mountain Fort. . . . In the vicinity was a camp of Assiniboin lodges, formed entirely of pine branches."

The fort—Rocky Mountain House—was beautifully situated on the Saskatchewan, on a small prairie about 180 miles southwest of Edmonton, with the Rocky Mountains rising in the distance. It was used during the winter season when the Blackfeet came to trade but was unoccupied in the summer. At the time of Kane's visit "a camp of Assiniboin lodges, formed entirely of pine branches," stood near the fort. Fortunately, he made a water-color drawing of this scene which is now reproduced in figure 6. Rocky Mountain House is in the distance with part of the Indian camp in the foreground. The words "Cree Lodges" appear faintly in the lower right corner of the sketch, but both Cree and Assiniboin Indians camped near the fort and all would have erected similar lodges.

Such primitive structures were used in the northern country, not always as permanent habitations but often as temporary lodges. In the latter capacity they served at Fort Union, on the Upper Missouri, during June 1833. Maximilian was at the post and wrote in his narrative:<sup>8</sup>

On the 26th of June, the arrival of a numerous band of Assiniboines was announced to us by several messengers. . . . Towards the north-west, the whole prairie was covered with scattered Indians, whose numerous dogs drew the sledges with the baggage.

Later, after the arrival of the Assiniboins, he continued:

On the west side of the fort the Indian women were engaged in erecting temporary travelling or hunting huts, composed of poles, fixed in the ground, and the dog sledges set up against them, and covered with green boughs, as they had brought only a part of their baggage.

The grouping of the bough-covered lodges, with the fort beyond, would have resembled the sketch made by Kane at Rocky Mountain House a few years later.

Another reference to structures similar to those just mentioned is to be found in a work treating of an earlier generation, and of another part of the country. Alexander Henry, when recording events of the year 1767, referred to his arrival in the vicinity of Michipicoten, on the north shore of Lake Superior, which he chose for his "wintering-ground," and wrote (p. 215):<sup>9</sup>

On reaching the trading-post, which was an old one of French establishment, I found ten lodges of Indians. They were *Gens de Terres*, or *O'pimittish Ininitwac*, of which nation I have already had occasion to speak. . . . Their lodges . . . have no covering, except the branches of the spruce-fir.

These were the wandering hunters, known to the French as the *Têtes de Boule*,<sup>10</sup> an Algonquian group who ranged through northern Quebec. As Henry elsewhere wrote (p. 60): "a peaceable and in-offensive race. . . . They have no villages; and their lodges are so rudely fashioned, as to afford them but very inadequate protection against inclement skies."

The same form of habitation was described at a much earlier time, far eastward from the Great Lakes, where it may have been seen by

<sup>8</sup> Op. cit., pp. 200-201.

<sup>9</sup> Henry, Alexander, *Travels and adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories, between the years 1760 and 1776*. New York, 1809.

<sup>10</sup> Michelson discussed the *Tête de Boule* in *Linguistic Classification of Cr e and Montagnais-Naskapi Dialects*. Bur. Amer. Ethnol. Bull. 123, Anthropol. Pap. No. 8, 1939.

the first Europeans to reach the northern wilderness. As related by Purchas, (p. 748):<sup>11</sup>

The Island of Assumption, by the Savages called *Natiscotec*, standeth in 49. deg. The Savages dwell in houses made of Fir-trees, bound together in the top, and set round like a Dove-house.. This . . . is at the entry of the River into the gulfe of S. Laurence.



FIG. 7.—April 1848. Pe-a-pus-qua-num, a Cree Indian at Rocky Mountain House.

This was the large island now known as Anticosti.

While at Rocky Mountain House, Kane had sufficient time to make sketches with care and deliberation. He was less hurried and possibly less excited than when encountering a group of Indians on the prairie, who were always suspicious of his desire to take "their like-

<sup>11</sup> Purchas, Samuel, *Purchas his Pilgrimage*. London, 1614.

nesses." A portrait of a Cree Indian made at that time is an excellent example of his work. It is not mentioned in "Wanderings," nor was it copied in oil after the artist's return to Toronto. But it was described in a manuscript list of Kane's sketches as: "Pe-a-pusqua-num, or *One that passes through the sky*, a Cree Indian living among the Assiniboines at Rocky Mountain House." The original water-color sketch is reproduced in figure 7. The face and neck are painted red, but under each eye, and possibly beneath the lower lip, is a tinge of blue. The characteristic lock of hair is divided at the lower end and rests on the nose. One small strand of hair extends down over each cheek and is decorated with white beads. A necklace of blue and white beads is also shown. This is one of the most finished portrait-sketches made by Kane during all his travels through the Indian country.

A water-color drawing of a white horse is reproduced in figure 8. The tail and mane had been painted red, with red dots on the body and short horizontal stripes on the legs. A large eagle feather was attached to the tail and a bunch of small feathers appears to have been fastened to the forelock. A bridle and a saddle pad and stirrups are shown. The horse belonged to a Blackfoot Indian, but where the sketch was made is not revealed—possibly at Rocky Mountain House, where the Blackfeet came to trade. The painting records a known custom of the tribe which was described by Maximilian while at Fort McKenzie, August 10, 1833.<sup>12</sup> A large group of Blackfeet visited the fort to trade, and, as was their custom, they carried presents. Maximilian wrote:

They advanced in small parties, headed by their chiefs, who always bring a present consisting either of some beavers' skins or of a horse. The first horses that we received in this manner were two greys and a light bay, which were variously painted with red, chiefly on the forehead, the shoulders, and the haunches, and marked on the legs with transverse stripes like a zebra, and on each side of the backbone with figures in the shape of arrow heads.

This account agrees well with the drawing made by Kane some 15 years later.

Horses had been used for many years by the Blackfeet. On October 14, 1754, Anthony Hendry, who had started from York Factory several months before, arrived among the Blackfeet at some point not far northeast from the site of the present city of Calgary, Alberta, and wrote in part concerning them (p. 337):<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Op. cit., pp. 262-263.

<sup>13</sup> Hendry, Anthony, Journal of . . . 1754-1755. Proc. and Trans. Roy. Soc. Canada, 3d ser., vol. 1, 1907.

Their horses are turned out to grass, their legs being fettered: and when wanted, are fastened to lines cut of Buffalo skin, that stretches along & is fastened to stakes drove in the ground. They have hair halters, Buffalo skin pads, & stirrups of the same.

The buffalo skin pads, which served as saddles, and the stirrups also made of buffalo hide were probably similar to those shown by Kane.

Kane again returned to Edmonton.

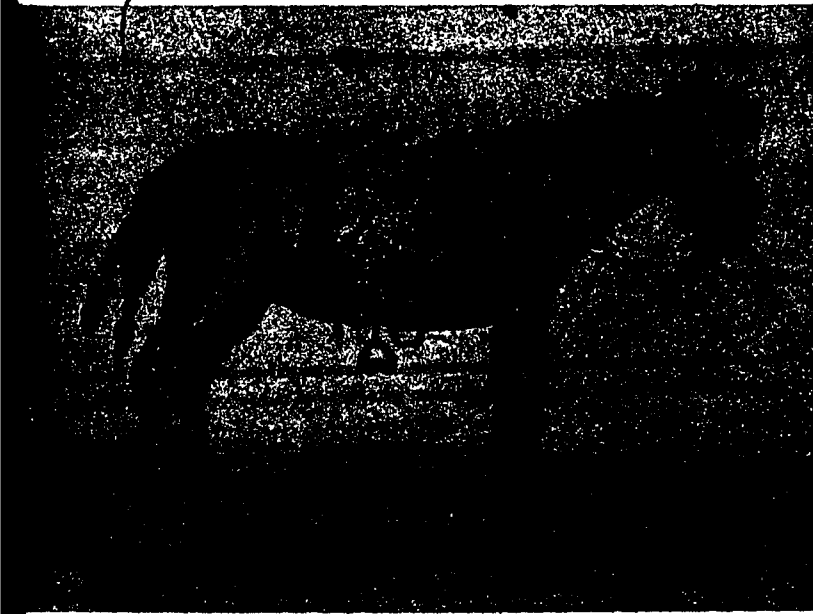


FIG. 8.—Blackfoot horse decorated with red paint and feathers.

On May 25, 1848, all being in readiness and the weather having cleared, a start was made from Edmonton. Twenty-three boats formed the brigade, with 130 men, bound down the Saskatchewan to Norway House. Thence, crossing the lower end of Lake Winnipeg, they soon entered Nelson River and continued down the stream to York Factory, on the shore of Hudson Bay, where the furs were placed on board ships to be carried to England.

Kane, having decided to return to his home in Toronto, left Edmonton with the brigade, as did the Catholic Bishop of Vancouver and several others who had come from beyond the Rocky Mountains, but they separated from the main party at Norway House.

Drifting rapidly down the river, they reached Fort Pitt the second day after the departure from Edmonton. Many buffalo were seen, and several large herds were encountered crossing the river and moving southward. At Fort Pitt two boats loaded with furs joined the brigade. In addition to the furs, to be sent to Europe, they carried much pemmican destined for distant posts where food was difficult to procure. These commodities came from "the Saskatchewan district."

On the first day of June, while the boats were floating down the Saskatchewan, "a large war-party, consisting of Blackfoot Indians, Blood Indians, ~~Sux-cées~~, Gros Ventres, and Pay-gans," was seen riding rapidly across the prairie and approaching the river bank. To quote Kane's description of the events that followed:

We instantly put ashore to meet them, and Mr. Harriett and myself met them on the banks of the river, leaving strict orders with the men to keep the boats afloat sufficiently near the shore for us to re-embark promptly in case of danger. They received Mr. Harriett, however, in a most friendly manner, he being personally known to numbers of them. They immediately spread a buffalo skin for us to sit down upon, depositing all their arms, consisting of knives, guns, and bows and arrows, on the ground in front of us in token of amity.

There was, however, one exception to this pacific demonstration, in the case of an Indian I had frequently heard spoken of before, named Omoxesisixany, "Big Snake." This chief walked around the party, cracking and flourishing a whip, and singing a war song, evidently desirous of getting up a fight, and refusing to lay down his arms with the rest, although frequently requested to do so.

Soon, however, Big Snake consented to take a "few puffs from the pipe which was going the round of the party," and peace prevailed.

Fifteen hundred warriors were in the party, in pursuit of the Cree and Assiniboin. This remarkable gathering of Indians was described by the artist as "the best mounted, the best looking, and the most war-like in appearance," of all he had encountered in his travels. The English and the Indians remained together until the following morning, a plan, so Kane wrote, "which was exceedingly acceptable to me, as it enabled me to make several sketches, and to hear something about them." He later mentioned having made several portrait-sketches at that time, one being that of Big Snake, and another of "Mis-ke-me-kin, 'The Iron Collar,' a Blood Indian chief, with his face painted red."

The sketch of Big Snake, made that evening on the banks of the Saskatchewan at some point not far from the mouth of Battle River, is shown in figure 9. No decoration of any sort appears—neither paint nor feathers. The original sketch of Iron Collar is also repro-

duced in figure 9. The entire face of the latter is painted red, and a gorget, appearing to have been made of metal and studded with embossed ornaments, crossed the throat. This was probably the "iron collar" which gave the Indian his name.

The brigade of boats continued on to Norway House, other boats joining them on the way, and all arrived safely. To quote again from "Wanderings": "Before leaving Norway House, some Cree Indians arrived, and boasted that one of their war chiefs had vanquished the great Blackfoot chief, Big Snake, in single combat." But the report was erroneous, and Black Snake lived another 10 years.<sup>14</sup>

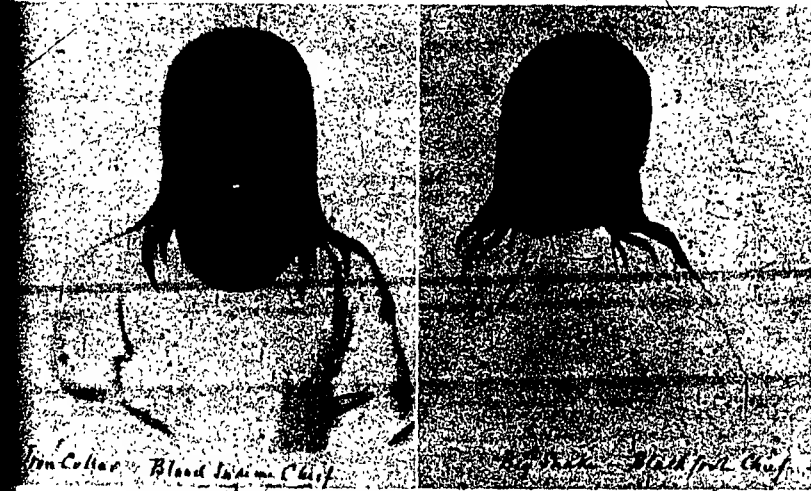


FIG. 9.—Two Indians met on the bank of the Saskatchewan below Fort Pitt, June 1, 1848. Left, Mis-ke-me-kin; right, Omoxesisixany, or Big Snake.

Carlton was reached June 5, and 5 days later the brigade stopped at Cumberland House. On June 12 they arrived at The Paw and

<sup>14</sup> I am indebted to John G. Carter for an account of Big Snake derived from various sources. The name of the Indian was "Big Snake, Oh-muck-see h-a-kwan, or Loud Voice, also called Black Snake Man, a Piegan Chief." Again from the manuscript: "It appears that both the Big-brave and Elk-horn winter counts place the death of Big Snake in the year 1858.

From all of the foregoing we conclude: That Big Snake was a chief of a band of the Piegan Indians; that in 1842 he ran off with forty head of horses and mules at Fort Union; that he was the father-in-law of White Calf; that he was an announcer, or crier, and took a part in the treaty of October 17, 1855, at Judith River; and that he was killed in 1858."



there met Sir John Richardson and Dr. Rae, with two canoes, bound for the Mackenzie River in the endeavor to find Sir John Franklin. Norway House was reached on June 17, where, so Kane wrote: "the brigade left me, they going on to York Factory, and I remaining to meet Major McKenzie, who was expected soon to pass on his way to Fort Frances." After much delay, severe storms and head winds on Lake Winnipeg, and a delay of 4 days at Fort Alexander, Kane finally arrived at Fort Frances August 23. "Here the annual three months' voyage terminates, that being the time which it takes to convey the furs to York Factory, in Hudson's Bay, and bring back the outfit of goods."

Pushing forward from Fort Frances, through lakes and streams, with many portages, the artist reached Fort William, on the shore of Lake Superior, September 19. "On leaving Fort William, we suffered a great deal the next five days from the high cold wind, which frequently stopped our progress." Late on September 27 Kane arrived at Michipicoton where, during the year 1767, Alexander Henry established his "wintering ground." "The post," so wrote Kane, "is situated in a deep bay at the mouth of the river, and is surrounded by some of the best land to be found on the British shores of Lake Superior. The head chief of the Ojibbeways, who resides near the post, sat for me in his red coat trimmed with gold lace. These coats are given by the Company to such Indian chiefs as have been friendly and serviceable to them, and are very highly prized by their possessors. His name was Maydoc-game-kinuaggee, 'I hear the Noise of the Deer.'" The original portrait-sketch of the Ojibway chief, believed to have been the last portrait-sketch made by Kane, is reproduced in figure 10. Later a large copy in oil was made from the sketch and now hangs in the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology, Toronto. The later picture differs in some details from the water-color sketch, made on the shore of Lake Superior. In the finished painting only one head is shown on the medal worn by the chief, but in the original sketch two heads appear on the medal. It undoubtedly bore the portraits of Victoria and Albert.

On October 1, 1848, Kane arrived at Sault Ste. Marie and wrote in his narrative: "Here I consider that my Indian travels finish, as the rest of my journey home to Toronto was performed on board steam-boats."

The artist returned to Toronto safely after an arduous journey across the continent to the Pacific and return. He had succeeded in making innumerable sketches of the country through which he passed;

of many Indians, wild, barbaric members of western tribes; and of scattered posts of the Hudson's Bay Company. He had witnessed many stirring events during his years of wandering and had seen much that would now prove of the greatest interest to the historian and ethnologist, but, unfortunately, he failed to keep a journal and his "Wanderings" is all too brief and incomplete.



FIG. 10.—September 27, 1848. Maydoc-game-kinungee, Ojibway chief at Michipicoton on north shore of Lake Superior.

Among Kane's 100 oil paintings which were originally made by the artist for the Hon. George William Allan, later acquired by Dr. E. B. Osler, and by him presented to the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology, is one which deserves special mention. This is the largest canvas in the collection and is designated "Sioux Scalp Dance," with Fort Snelling appearing in the background. As Kane had never

visited Fort Snelling, on the right bank of the Mississippi at the mouth of the Minnesota River, it is strange that he should have made the painting. But the picture of the fort was based on a sketch made by the artist Henry Lewis in 1846 or 1848, a small copy of which he sent to Kane several years later. The drawing of the fort, in pencil, was made on a page of a letter from Lewis to Kane, part of which follows:

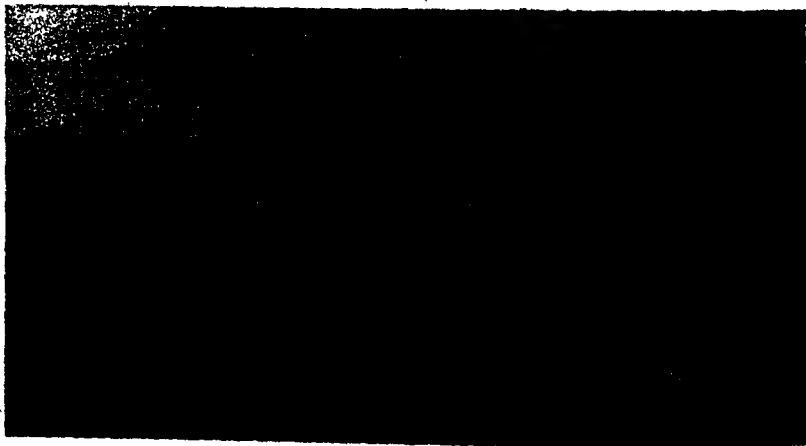


FIG. 11.—Fort Snelling. Sketched by Henry Lewis and sent by him to Kane.

MONTREAL, JULY 4TH

FRIEND KANE:

When I left your studio some months back to go and get my sketch book, I found the boat just ready to start . . . . I did not come back again to show you the drawing of the fort. I now send you . . . a slight sketch of Fort Snelling which may help you a little. It should have been sent long ago but much business drove the matter out of my head till yesterday when we were talking of you. . . .

I remain truly yours

H. LEWIS.

Henry Lewis was the author of "Das Illustrierte Mississippithal," published in Germany in 20 parts between the years 1854 and 1857. A picture of Fort Snelling appears in the work, but it differs from the sketch sent by Lewis to Kane and which is now reproduced in figure 11.

Had Kane lived and been spared his sight, it is within reason to believe he would have continued his work among the Indians and could have added many pictures to those which he had already made, but fate decreed otherwise. His sketches and paintings will always be of interest, an interest which will increase as the years pass. They reveal phases of life which can never again be witnessed, so great are the changes wrought during the past century.